



SUPPORTING YOUR PICKY EATER



Why Are So Many Young Children Picky Eaters?

- Children often become picky around the age of three
- Children are naturally cautious about unfamiliar foods
- Preschool-aged children start to become aware of social messages about food – TV ads, what friends and family members are eating or saying about food
- A preschooler's growth happens at a slower rate than toddlers – this causes their appetites to be smaller which makes them seem picky when they are simply not hungry

How To Handle Picky Eaters

- ◆ Many children will change their reaction to a food through repeated exposure – it can take eight to 12 exposures to new foods before some children start accepting them
- ◆ Introduce one new food at a time with other familiar foods

- ◆ If children do not want to taste a new food, encourage them to look, touch and smell it - this can lead to accepting it later on
- ◆ Preparing new foods different ways may help with texture, shape and taste
- ◆ Be a positive role model - eat regular meals and snacks together, offer your child the same foods that you eat and provide plenty of chances to try new healthy foods





REMEMBER...

- Picky eating is a normal part of childhood
- Be patient and keep trying - children can learn to like new foods after seeing it many times
- Children's appetite will vary from meal to meal and their likes and dislikes will change often
- Keep meal times pleasant - avoid power struggles and focus on the positive behaviours
- If your child takes more than they can eat, don't insist they finish - just remind them to take less next time
- By being a good role model, you can help your child develop healthy eating habits that can make a lasting impact on their health



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Nutrition Resource Centre - (2017) Eat Right Be Active: A Guide for Caregivers

- Preschoolers ages 3-5
- Children ages 6-8

Unlockfood.ca: Children's Nutrition

- Children's Nutrition - Picky-Eating



Connect with a public health nurse at Niagara Parents



905-684-7555 or
1-888-505-6074 ext. 7555



parents@niagararegion.ca

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